

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are now pending in this application for which applicant seeks reconsideration.

Priority Acknowledgment

The priority acknowledgment box in section 12 of the Office Action Summary was incorrectly checked. Since this application is a § 371 National stage application, applicant need not submit any certified priority document. Please correctly acknowledge the claim for priority.

Amendment

Claims 1-6 have been amended to improve their form, readability, and clarity. Claim 1 has been amended to depend from claim 3. New claim 7 has been added to further define the weighting unit. New claim 8 has been added to define that the directional characteristics overlap. See Fig. 10. No new matter has been introduced.

Art Rejection

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Hooley (WO 01/023104). Claims 1, 4, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hooley in view of Yanagawa (USP 5,233,664). Claims 2 and 5 were rejected under § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hooley in view of Yanagawa and Johnson (USP 6,181,796). Applicant traverses these rejections because none of the applied references would have disclosed or taught generating two different directivity control informations to provide two different directional characteristics at the same time based on the same input signal as now set forth in independent claim 3.

Specifically, claim 3 calls for a branching unit that branches an input audio signal into two or more signals. A first delay unit provides a first delay for one of the branched audio signals and supplies first delay processed signals to the loudspeakers in accordance with the first directivity control information. A second delay unit provides a second delay process for another of the branched audio signals and supplies second delay processed signals to the loudspeakers in accordance with the second directivity control information. A directivity control unit generates the first directivity control information and the second directivity control information so that the directional characteristic of the array speaker unit obtained by the first delay differs from the directional characteristic of the array speaker unit obtained by the second

delay, and supplies the generated information respectively to the first delay unit and the second delay unit.

Applicant submits that that Hooley does not disclose or teach the claimed directivity control unit that generates two different directivity control informations (first and second) to provide two different directional characteristics concurrently based on the same input signal.

In rejecting claim 3, the examiner referred to Fig. 15. Fig. 15, however, merely discloses the details of the distributors 102, 503-505, each of which includes a delay circuit. Applicant believes that Hooley's Fig. 5 is more relevant since it discloses applying the same signal 502 to two different distributors 504, 505, which best correspond to the claimed delay units. Nonetheless, Hooley still fails to disclose concurrently providing two different directional characteristics based on the same input signal. Moreover, Hooley fails to provide overlapping the directivities as set forth in new claim 8, which is directed to the embodiment of Fig. 10.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that claims 1-8 patentably distinguish over the applied references and are in condition for allowance. Should the examiner have any issues concerning this reply or any other outstanding issues remaining in this application, applicant urges the examiner to contact the undersigned to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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29 FEBRUARY 2008

DATE

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REG. NO. 34,079 (RULE 34, WHERE APPLICABLE)

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